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**Dimbie's
 Dustman Tales**
 By M. O. TAYLOR

XVI.

DIMBIE was so very, very sleepy one night, and she had hardly snuggled down into the pillows when who should come but

THE DUSTMAN HIMSELF

He was a little, grey man: grey hair, grey dress, grey eyes, and a little, grey bag over his shoulder, full of "Sleep dust." You know, that's the stuff he puts in your eyes every night to make you go to sleep. Into some little children he has to put

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quite a lot, because they are so very wide awake, but Dimbie was so sleepy that he didn't need to use any "Sleep dust," but just nodded his head very slowly, two or three times, and then Dimbie's head nodded, too—nid, nod, nid, nod, and the next minute she was in

"That beautiful place called Dreamland, The land where wishes come true."

There were lots of little boys and girls in Dreamland. The "dream boats" were full of them, and still they kept coming, all in white gowns, with their heads nodding all the time, and by each little child walked a grey dustman with his bag of "Sleep dust" on his shoulder.

"Now, where shall we go, Dimbie?" said the Dustman. "Nightmare Land, Nursery Rhyme Land, or The Land where wishes come true?"

"Oh, I don't want to go to Nightmare Land," said Dimbie. "It doesn't sound a bit nice."

"Oh, well, of course, we won't stay there," said the Dustman, "because that's only for silly children who will eat cakes and pies and plum pudding before they go to bed; but, just in case you might be foolish like that, we'll take a peep and then you'll never want to."

So away they went to Nightmare Land, and who do you think Dimbie saw there? Why, the little boy who lived right next door to her and always did just whatever he wanted to. He was having a terrible time falling down nightmare stairs; they were so high and he was so small, and as fast as he fell down two little Dustman picked him up and made him walk right up to the top and tumble down again. The poor, little boy was rubbing his knees and rubbing his elbows and rubbing the tears from his eyes, but still he had to keep walking up and falling down.

"Oh, dear me," said Dimbie, "Will he have to keep doing that all night long?"

"Yes," said the Dustman. "And serve him right; he will eat pie before he goes to bed."

"Oh, look!" said Dimbie. "There's the little girl across the way. What ever is she doing?"

"Come and see," said the Dustman. And what do you think Dimbie saw?

"Why, a great, great, big, sugar cake, just like a mountain, with a hole in the middle, and right down at the bottom of the hole was the little girl across the way. She was crying, too, and trying to get out of the cake, climbing, climbing, all the time, and as fast as she got to the top down fell the cake on top of her, all in her nose and hair and mouth and eyes, just like a lot of sand, only much worse, because it was sticky, and then she would brush it off and start all over again."

"Oh, dear," said Dimbie, "she'll never get out."

"Yes, she will," said the Dustman. "When morning comes. You know, Dimbie, I'm not a bit sorry for all these silly children, who will eat things they shouldn't; it serves them right. Come; we've had enough of Nightmare Land. Away to the Land of Nursery Rhymes."

And away they went. It was lovely in the Land of Nursery Rhymes, and Dimbie saw ever so many old friends she knew. There was—

"Hey, diddle, diddle. The cat and the fiddle, The cow jumped over the moon. The little dog laughed to see such sport, And the dish ran away with the spoon."

"How do you like running away with the spoon?" said Dimbie, laughing.

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"Oh, I don't mind," said the Dish. "It's great fun."

"Well, I do," said the Spoon. "I'm so tired; besides, he keeps running away with me all the time."

"Well, supposing you had to keep laughing like me?" said the Little Dog.

"Well, that's not as bad as me," said the Cow; jumping over this old moon—such nonsense."

"Fie! fie!" said the Dustman. "I'm ashamed of you all. Besides, what would the little children do if there were no Nursery Rhymes?"

"That's what I say," said the Cat and the Fiddle (speaking at once). "Come along, Dimbie, we'll go and see

"The old Woman, who lived in a shoe, She had so many children she didn't know what to do; She gave them some broth without any bread, And whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed."

And the next minute they were standing by a great, big shoe, just like a house, with windows and a door, and a lot of little children, all looking at them, and right in the doorway was the Old Woman, with a big birch broom.

"Oh, dear!" said Dimbie. "What a lot of them! I wonder if she ever loses any."

"Hush," said a tiny voice behind her. "She's going to lose me."

Dimbie turned round, and there, hidden under a big leaf, was a teeny, weeny little girl—so small, so small—well, just about as small as a peanut.

"Oh, I'll tell," said Dimbie, laughing.

"No, don't," said the teeny, weeny girl. "You see, I live right in the toe of the shoe, and it's so dark and uncomfortable, so I crawled out and hid, and then I'm going to run away to 'The Land where wishes come true,' and wish to be a big girl like you."

"But, supposing the 'Old Woman' finds you?" said Dimbie.

"Well, if she does," said the teeny, weeny girl,

"She'll whip me quite soundly and send me to bed."

"So, please don't tell."

"Of course, I won't," said Dimbie; and just then the Dustman said, "And now away to the 'Land where wishes come true,' and the next minute they were right there."

Everybody looked so happy in the "Land where wishes come true," and Dimbie saw lots of little children she knew.

There was the little boy who sold matches at the corner of the street, and always looked so cold and hungry. He was sitting in front of a great blazing fire, wrapped in a big, soft blanket, and eating turkey and Christmas pudding, and if you could only have seen his face—it was just beaming all over with happiness.

"Does he come here every night?" said Dimbie, softly.

"Yes, every night," said the Dustman; "and so, you see, when he is cold and hungry he thinks of 'The Land where wishes come true,' and knows when night comes he will have all he wishes for, and then it doesn't seem so bad."

And so they walked on, and presently came to a lovely garden—oh, such a beautiful place, with green, green grass and lovely flowers and singing birds, and just full of happy children; some dancing and jumping and running as if they had never known what it was to run and jump before, and some walking slowly and looking at each flower and bright bird as if they had never seen a bird or flower before.

"And who comes here?" said Dimbie, softly, and the Dustman answered with a very tender look on his face:—

"Dimbie, the lame and the blind come here; the poor, little children who lie on their backs all day or crawl slowly on crutches, and those whose eyes are closed and who never see the beautiful flowers and birds; they all come here at night to the 'Land where wishes come true.'"

"How lovely!" said Dimbie; "how very, very lovely! Dear Dustman, I would rather have seen this beautiful garden than anything else in the 'Land where wishes come true.'"

"Oh, but now I must have my wish," said Dimbie. "We nearly forgot my wish, didn't we?"

"So we did," said the Dustman, nodding his head very slowly up and down—nid, nod, nid, nod, and then Dimbie's head began to nod, too—nid, nod, nid, nod—and the more she tried to think, the more her head nodded, so all she could say was:—

"Oh, I wish I had a great..... great..... big..... big..... and then she stopped quite a long time to think.

"I know," said the Dustman, with his eyes twinkling just like the stars on a cold, frosty night, "a great..... great..... great..... big..... big..... handful of DUST," and he threw some right in her face, so that she gave a great, big jump, and..... opened her eyes to find the sun shining all over her and kissing her Good Morning.